Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 2001-2002

Rural Revitalization Office

Annual Report

2001-2002

Rural Revitalization Office

Annual Report for the twelve months
ending March 31, 2002.

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LETTERS OF TRANSMITTAL

Message from the Minister

To Her Honour
The Honourable Lynda Haverstock
Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan

Your Honour:

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Rural Revitalization Office for the twelve months ending March 31, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

Clay Serby

Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization

The Honourable Clay Serby, Deputy Premier
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Legislature of Saskatchewan

Sir:

I wish to present to you the annual report of the Rural Revitalization Office for the twelve months ending March 31, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

Gord Nysteun

Gord Nysteun
Deputy Minister

Rural Revitalization Office

2001– 2002 Annual Report

OVERVIEW

The information in this Annual Report reflects the operation of the Rural Revitalization Office during the fiscal year 2001-2002, its first fiscal year of operation.

The establishment of the Rural Revitalization Office was announced in the Throne Speech in March 2001. The Office's name was originally announced as the Rural Revitalization Secretariat in February, however this name was changed to the Rural Revitalization Office for the start of the 2001-2002 fiscal year.

The Rural Revitalization Office was created to support and encourage economic development in rural Saskatchewan. Recognizing that rural Saskatchewan faces many challenges that require a co-operative effort to overcome, the Office was established to help develop solutions and a strategy for future success.

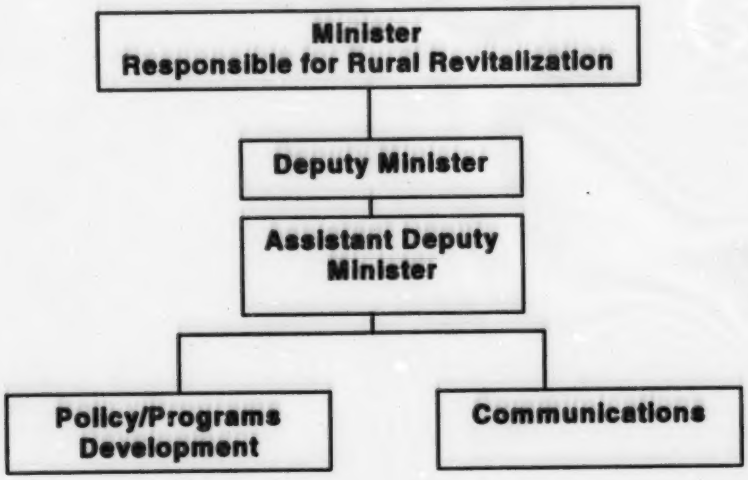
As part of government restructuring, the mandate and operations of the Rural Revitalization Office were moved into the new department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

VISION

The Rural Revitalization Office's vision for rural Saskatchewan is:

"A prosperous rural Saskatchewan, where government, communities, businesses and individuals work together to achieve sustainable economic development and an enhanced quality of life."

Organizational Structure of the Rural Revitalization Office (April 2001)



ORGANIZATION

The Rural Revitalization Office is comprised of two areas of operation: policy development and communications.

The Office functions primarily as a coordinating agency within government, advocating and facilitating initiatives through other provincial departments and agencies. The Office does not offer its own programs and does not duplicate programs or services of other departments and agencies.

Working with residents and with provincial departments and agencies, the Rural Revitalization Office strives to focus programs and services on helping people to take advantage of the economic opportunities in rural Saskatchewan.

The Rural Revitalization Office:

- works towards new initiatives to contribute to rural economic development;
- works to alleviate obstacles to rural opportunity;
- assesses government policy decisions for their impact on the rural economy;
- advocates and communicates rural achievement; and
- consults regularly with rural residents and businesses about rural economic opportunities and challenges.

In its inaugural year, 2001-2002, the budget allocation for the Rural Revitalization Office was $800,000. Actual expenditures for 2001-2002 were $597,341.87.

ACTIVITIES DURING 2001 – 2002

2001-2002 was a year of evolution for the Rural Revitalization Office. Two major areas of focus for the RRO include working closely with the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE) and developing the framework for a Provincial Rural Action Plan. The Office also assisted individuals, businesses and communities in their dealings with all levels of government and other agencies.

Establishing the Rural Revitalization Office

The first few months of the Office's existence were spent setting up the office and hiring staff. Over the year considerable efforts were made in establishing contacts with other departments and agencies, familiarizing them with the role of the Rural Revitalization Office and working with them on their policies and programs from a rural perspective. The Office was also involved in reviewing and providing comments from a rural perspective on a number of potential legislative amendments proposed by other departments.

Working with the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE) and Facilitating the Development of a Rural Action Plan

The Rural Revitalization Office has been actively involved with the Action Committee on the Rural Economy during the year. Representatives from the Office attended all ACRE meetings and acted as a resource to the committees. The recommendations provided to the Government by ACRE in early 2002 will be the basis for a provincial action plan for rural revitalization that will be prepared in 2002. Many provincial departments and agencies will be involved in the development and implementation of the rural action plan. In anticipation of ACRE releasing its final report early in 2002, the Rural Revitalization Office organized and worked with an inter-department working group that will be actively involved in developing and implementing the provincial action plan.

Assisting Individuals, Businesses and Communities

Considerable time and resources were spent dealing with specific issues raised by rural Saskatchewan.

The Rural Revitalization Office was involved in a wide range of activities, such as:

- Identified officials in the provincial government who could assist a committee representing a number of small municipalities, in its business planning, and in getting organized and focused toward a regional goal of developing housing over a number of years.
- Organized a number of meetings between a local rural municipality, provincial government departments and the federal government toward resolution of an issue involving federal government requirements associated with the construction of a bridge over a small river.
- Helped recruit and organize the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation's annual national fall conference held in Muenster, in October 2001, that focused on rural concerns and highlighted rural opportunities.
- With Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, organized the 2002 Rural Economic Opportunities Conference held on March 20 and 21, 2002. The conference provided rural entrepreneurs, communities and businesses with information they need to capture new opportunities in rural Saskatchewan.
- Worked with a seed processor in the Elbow area to address SaskTel's quoted costs for telephone service expansion. As a result of the facilitated discussions a significant reduction in the cost of telephone service expansion for the rural business was achieved.
- Worked with Stomp Pork Farms, the Leroy Agri-Pork Co-op and various government departments and agencies to ensure infrastructure issues were identified and addressed to help ensure the successful development of their proposed $40 million hog project.
- Responded to a request from community representatives from Climax and Frontier to meet with SaskTel to discuss cell phone coverage in the area. As a result of discussions that took place between community representatives and SaskTel, SaskTel is looking at the feasibility of enhancing cell phone service.

Financial Schedule 2001-2002

Rural Revitalization Office Schedule of Expenditure

		2001-02 Estimates $000s	2001-02 Actuals $000s	Variances over (under) $000s	Notes
Expenditure					
Rural Development Coordination	$	700	517	(183)	1
Accommodation and Central Services	$	100	80	(20)	
2001-2002 Total	$	800	597	(203)	
FTE Staff Complement (FTE-Full Time Equivalent)		8.00	5.66	(2.34)	2

These financial schedules have been prepared in accordance with the government's accrual accounting policies.

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Financial Schedule-Notes

Explanations of variances which exceed $20,000 between Estimates and Actuals.

Expenditure

1. Savings resulted from vacant positions and reduced travel.

FTE

2. The variance was a result of vacant staff positions throughout the year.